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viceable, but the serious student of the subject-matter, conversant with the genetic method of procedure nowadays dominant in dealing with all things mental, who turns to this for an adequate summary of the leading facts of child-study may feel a certain degree of disappointment at the species of data collected or at their co-ordination.

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*The Elements of Rhetoric and Composition.* By ASHLEY H. THORNDIKE, Professor of English Literature in Northwestern University. New York: The Century Co., 1905. Pp. 340.

*Elementary English Composition for High Schools and Academies.* By FREDERICK HENRY SYKES, Teachers College, Columbia University. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905. Pp. 328.

The mere fact that a book on English composition is "not analytic, but creative," will hardly account for its publication in these days, when many teachers have been earnestly striving to stimulate, rather than repress, and have been using textbooks inspired with the same purpose. That battle has been won. A new book must now find its justification, not only in being "constructive," but in being effective. The greatest present need in English teaching in the secondary school, in composition as well as in literature, is that of simplicity and modesty. A very few things of primary importance should be put before the pupil as clearly as possible; the rest is simply the practice of expression until he can write simple prose reasonably well. It is easy to talk of attaining much more than this, and easier to attain enormously less. To reach this end is to be effective.

It is the clear perception of this truth, first of all, which makes Professor Thorndike's book very valuable. It is quite possible to criticise it. Though the chapters may be read in any order, as the author suggests, there is no obvious reason for beginning in the middle of the subject, and it is just that to begin with the paragraph. It is partly on account of this arrangement that this book, like most books since the coming of "Scott and Denney," tends to give the impression that compositions are made by the addition of paragraphs, instead of the knowledge that paragraphs are made by the logical division of the theme, or the subject. And though the treatment of the sentence, while less formal than usual, is in general excellent, it is with surprise that one finds only the slightest hint of warning against the comma blunder, or the amputated subordinate clause. Apparently young people in the northern suburbs of Chicago are not beset by some of the worst foes of those in other places. So perhaps a slip of this particular kind in p. 40 of the text will not always and everywhere become a dangerous example. But the possible faults may be corrected by an intelligent teacher, while the merits of the book are convincing. It gives good advice about writing, in a way which must seem to the pupil clear and interesting. In some ways Professor Thorndike has, as he tells us, profited by the best of many books on composition. Indeed, it is odd that he omits from his list some which are most like his in purpose and in method. But Professor Thorndike may cheerfully concede something in the matter of originality, when the more important quality of usefulness is so well assured. The "exercise" at the end of each chapter, designed to give an inductive

approach to what is to follow, is an interesting device. The book is to be commended, too, for its brief treatment of small subjects, and the general neatness with which matter that is often cumbrous is disposed of in the last thirty pages and the appendix. But its crowning and comprehensive merit is its soundness—its admirable simplicity of definition and explanation, and, most of all, its singleness of purpose.

Dr. Sykes' book offers a striking contrast. In binding, print, and illustration, as well as in its effort to be "creative," it is very attractive. It is said to be a textbook in English composition for the first two years of high school. It is interesting, therefore, to note that on p. 3 the child is asked to write a story outlined as "Introduction; the First Scene; the Second Scene; Conclusion." On p. 82 he is introduced to the periodic sentence, and on p. 87 to the balanced sentence. On p. 111 he studies "explicit reference" in the paragraph; on p. 121 the rhythm of prose. In Part II, chap. 1 treats of "embellished incident," while chap. 2 discusses "embellished description," and the "salient characteristic." Part III is an analysis of the short story. Part V begins with an explanation of induction and deduction, and proceeds to discuss direct and indirect proof, *reductio ad absurdum*, the dilemma, and the method of residues. As the pupil has by this time acquired rather more technical knowledge than most universities expect their students to have at the end of the sophomore year, and as the subject of rhetoric is really exhausted, he may finish the second year of high school by studying Part VI, on versification, rime, alliteration, tone, onomatopœa, combination of stanzas, and the Italian and Shakespearean sonnets. Then having written some iambic trimeter, trochaic tetrameter, dactylic dimeter, amphibrachic tetrameter, quatrains, sonnets, and other verse of other kinds, he is ready to enter the third year and find new worlds to conquer.

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